

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING

*Recommendation of the Commissioners of the Soldiers' Home for legislation
to dispose of property of deceased members of the Home.*

FEBRUARY 1, 1886.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, January 26, 1886.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit to the United States Senate a letter, dated the 29th ultimo, from the president of the Board of Commissioners of the Soldiers' Home near this city, recommending on behalf of the Board the passage of an act, or the amendment of existing law, which will give authority for the disposition of the effects and money belonging to the estates of deceased inmates or members of the Home.

It will be seen from the inclosed letter that under existing law "all moneys belonging to the estates of deceased soldiers, which are or may be unclaimed for the period of three years subsequent to the death of such soldiers," shall be applied to the support of the Home, "to be repaid by the Commissioners of the institution upon the demand of the heirs or legal representatives of the deceased," and that provision is also made for the disposition of any pension money in the hands of the treasurer of the Home and due to the estate of a deceased inmate, by directing that it shall escheat to the Home if no demand by legal heirs be made within three years. There is no authority of law, however, for the disposition of the other money or effects of a deceased inmate.

The recommendation of the Commissioners is concurred in.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. C. ENDICOTT,
Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE.

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF THE SOLDIERS' HOME,
Washington, D. C., December 29, 1885.

SIR: The Commissioners of the Soldiers' Home desire to request that you will recommend to Congress the passage of an act or the amendment of an existing law which will give authority for the disposition of

the effects and money belonging to the estates of deceased inmates or members of the Home. Section 4818 of the Revised Statutes provides that—

All moneys belonging to the estates of deceased soldiers, which are or may be unclaimed for the period of three years subsequent to the death of such soldiers, shall be applied toward the support of the Home, to be repaid by the Commissioners of the institution, upon the demand of the heirs or legal representatives of the deceased.

Section 4 of the act approved March 3, 1883, making regulations for the Soldiers' Home, provides for the disposition of any pension money in the hands of the treasurer of the Home and due to the estate of a deceased inmate, by directing that it shall escheat to the Home if no demand by legal heirs be made within three years. But there is no authority for the disposition of other money or effects of a deceased inmate, and there is great need for some legislation upon the question. It is thought that the best form to give such legislation will be in the shape of an act which will constitute the treasurer of the Home the administrator upon the estates of all persons who die while receiving the benefits, provided there are no legal representatives of such deceased persons competent to take out letters of administration (limiting the time for such action to about three months), and directing that the money realized from all estates administered by the treasurer shall be paid into the funds of the Home subject to the demand of legal heirs at any time.

The treasurer of the Home is under a bond of \$20,000 for the faithful performance of his duties, and if the duties of administrator as suggested shall be added in the manner proposed, the act should provide that additional bonds in the individual cases be not required of him.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. H. SHERIDAN,

*Lieut. Gen., Com'd'g the Army,
Pres'd't Board of Commissioners.*

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

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